



**Town of Amherst
Joint Capital Planning Committee Meeting
March 11, 2010 5:30 p.m.
Bangs Community Center, Pole Room
70 Boltwood Walk**

Minutes

1. Call to order and declaration of a quorum

Chair Schoen called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Members present: Peter Demling, Tamson Ely, Mandi Jo Hanneke, Alex Lefebvre, Cathy Schoen, Kerry Spitzer, Andrew Steinberg

Members absent: None,

Members participating remotely: None

Others present: Interim Finance Director Sonia Aldrich, Library Director Sharon Sharry, Amherst Regional Public Schools (ARPS) Director of Finance Doug Slaughter, ARPS Information Technology Director Jerry Champagne, ARPS Facilities Director Rupert Roy-Clark, Library Facilities Director George Hicks, and minute-taker Lindsey McConnell

2. Library Capital Requests

A. Presentation

Sharon Sharry and George Hicks presented the Jones Library Capital fund requesting the Town vote in favor of accepting the Massachusetts Board of Library Commission's (MBLC) construction grant for expansions and renovation. Sharry reviewed important milestones over the last thirteen years that have led to the Library's current request. Milestones include space planning with the Massachusetts' Library System, completing the Woodbury Room renovation by the Friends of the Jones Library System, beginning the annual Sammy's awards and gala, receiving a grant from the MBLC for design, hiring architects to complete schematics, hiring fundraising consultants, conducting a campaign readiness study, asking the Town for a vote to apply for grant. The Jones Library will be working with fundraisers to apply for grants and approach private donors. The Library Sustainability Committee is working with architects to conduct studies based on sustainability goals. Sharry stated the Library Trustees have important decisions coming up about balancing sustainability and historic preservation. Sharry reviewed options the

Town can take when they vote in July. Option 1 is if the Town votes to accept the MBLC grant and has a total cost \$35.6 million, with a Town commitment of \$21.7 million to come from variety of sources. Option 2 is if the Town rejects the MBLC grant. The library has hired Kuhn Riddle Architecture to provide a cost estimate for pieces of Option 2 that will be available mid-April. Sharry stated they plan to present to the Council in the spring with the architects present once they have the figures.

B. Questions and Answers

The committee asked clarifying questions regarding the options, predictions on Kuhn Riddle's estimates and if the costs will show a phased approach, the impacts on library services, the IT portion of the options, feasibility of also including civil war tablets in Option 2, if historic renovation tax cuts may be applicable and the pursuit of sustainability grants.

The committee discussed their role as advisors to the Town Manager. Schoen confirmed the committee needs clarity considering the decision to accept the grant will happen in Council, JCPC is focused on cash capital requests for FY21 (including debt service). The major building financing discussion and decisions will be taken up by the Council.

Steinberg spoke to the difficulty of not having Kuhn Riddle numbers yet and the need for borrowing calculations to accurately consider the options.

Hanneke asked Interim Finance Director Sonia Aldrich what is included in the borrowing figures listed on the capital plan. Aldrich explained they are still working with Town Manager on what needs to be included in the figures. Aldrich further clarified Sean Mangano has been working on the borrowing figures and there should be updates soon.

Schoen asked Aldrich if the committee can make time next meeting to discuss the figures in more depth including if there will be a surplus in 5 years and how much cash capital is underlying the figures. Aldrich stated the agendas of the meetings are based on departments making presentations. S. Mangano will go over all of the numbers and you'll have more realistic numbers in a week.

C. Public Comment: The committee agreed to receive public comment on this proposal only first.

Kent Faerber, Friends of the Jones Library, stated he was going to speak to the project but if that is not in front of you now, I'll save your time and come back

Katherine Appy, Amherst Forward, spoke in support the Jones Library Expansion. Appy agrees Town Leader should move forward with all four capital projects, the library, school, Department of Public Works and the Fire Station. All are needed to provide quality infrastructure. Appy stated because Amherst has an excellent bond rating and no debt, now is the time to borrow. The longer the Town waits, the more costs will increase. Appy stated it would be irresponsible to wait. Amherst should move forward with common sense plan leveraging state funds to meet today's residents' needs. If we don't, we will give up millions of dollars for much needed capital improvements.

Ludmilla Pavlova stated the library and school capital projects complement each other and should both be completed. Pavlova seconded Appy's statements and stated this town has shot itself in the foot being frugal.

Matt Blumenfeld, described experience working on a large number of library projects and expressed familiarity with the grant program. Blumenfeld stated this is fantastic opportunity that probably won't come around for another decade. The size of projects grows but state budget stays stable. Construction costs have doubled since 2000. Blumenfeld gave an example of a library project in Springfield that had fabulous community impact and increased use. Finally, deferred maintenance to do anything substantial will be in \$10 million range, so the options are to spend little more money and get fabulous library or still spend a bunch and get smaller library.

3. School Capital Requests

A. Presentation on IT

Doug Slaughter introduced himself as new Director of Finance as well as Jerry Champagne, Director of Information Systems and Rupert Roy-Clark, Facilities Director.

Champagne provided background on amount of computers in schools and the strategy of spreading out the need for replacements and extending the finite lives of computers. Champagne spoke to each item on the District's IT requests. Items that need to be replaced include: 706 Chromebooks, about 12 monitors and approximately 44 data projectors. The District will need to replace some infrastructure like switches, which are devices that interconnect buildings and remote rooms like a hub and spokes, to work best with the town wide update to a fiber network. Switches and battery back ups are important to school safety infrastructure. No money is being requested for telephones because the District used existing budget to purchase inexpensive IP phones that use open source software on commodity servers.

B. Questions and Answers for IT

Hanneke inquired about how much money is remaining from prior fiscal years. The figures provided indicate there is money left and Hanneke questioned if the schools should be spending that before being granted more money?

Champagne and Slaughter explained those figures are not accurate and confirmed they will provide updated numbers on past fiscal years and remaining budgets. Some of those funds have been spent or are allotted to be spent on other known needs.

Schoen inquired about if the choice of vendor for Chromebooks was to satisfy state policies on testing. Champagne explained Chromebook isn't mandated for state testing, there are other options. The School District considered operating systems in addition to the vendor. The way Chromebooks work and how they lock students into the test make them easy to use. Traditional computers can be used for students who need accommodations. Slaughter explained the State has a procurement policy the School District is compelled to follow. The State provides as list of pre-vetted vendors but if you are buying hundreds of devices you can ask for quotes. Champagne asks multiple vendors for quotes and negotiated to get additional warranties including accidental damage to get the best value.

Lefebvre proposed looking forward to Fiscal Year25 and inquired if the school District is keeping in mind anything that is not portable and what may be movable to the new school.

Champagne explained he has made a ten-year plan factoring in that the State will be paying 60% of new school. Without knowing the layout of the new school, it is difficult to plan for things like WIFI coverage. Some things are portable, some things will need to be replaced. The District will want to take advantage of state monies and Champagne reiterated the District's responsible replacement cycle.

C. Presentation School Copiers

Slaughter presented on District requests related to copiers. Slaughter state the District has moved away from desktop printers and towards larger scale printers. Slaughter explained copiers get a lot of use but don't last forever, usually after 5 million copies it makes more economic sense to buy a new machine then continue repairs and maintenance. The capital request is for two machines and 1/3 of a machine for the Production Center. The other districts in the region will carry the other 2/3 of the cost. Individual printers are generally reserved for people in special education programs and printing with privacy concerns.

D. Question and Answers School Copiers

Hanneke asked if Pelham, Shutesbury or Leveret ever use the Production Center copier. Slaughter explained their use is minimal and rare.

The committee also discussed portability of copiers to new schools and future needs with construction of a new school, the maintenance cost of existing older copiers that are still in place.

E. Presentation: School Facilities

Slaughter introduced the presentation stating the District presumes they will be successful in the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) project to build a building in the future but the Town will still own the other buildings. Slaughter stated they will know more next year but in the meantime there are several requested items with the letters "FR or WW" beside it because we don't know which building will be replaced and which one will need maintenance. The District's focus is on keeping buildings safe, functional and operational

Roy Clark stated the District's requests are mindful of not paying something that might be thrown away and is not portable. Roy Clark gave examples of Crocker Farm chiller maintenance and the prolonging the life of the Fort River roof. Roy Clark stated the current request is supplemental to remaining outstanding funds from previous years. The District is requesting a van for special education and a fleet vehicle for winter plowing to replace old and unreliable vehicles. The request also includes funds for chiller maintenance and rental chillers, which is cheaper than purchasing a whole new chiller. Requests for interior upgrades are based on an ADA survey. The District is legally required to show progress on improving accessibility even at a building that will be taken down. The most dire needs are toilet accessibility at Fort River and Wildwood and the District is pursuing design work for Room A, Room B and nurses' office bathrooms.

F. Questions and Answers: School Facilities

The committee discussed the cost of a new chiller versus maintenance and rental if neither school is de-accessioned by FY 21, the status of the school building decision process and the feasibility of buying and then reselling a chiller.

Hanneke inquired about a possible discrepancy in year \$210,000 figure in the HVAC Replacement figures for this year. Roy-Clark agreed this may be an error and it should be \$110,000 across.

Demling and Spitzer spoke to their involvement in an ADA accessibility study of the schools. Demling stated many needed items are not being requested and the Town has disabled kids that are going to be in the buildings for 5 to 7 more years and their education matters. Roy-Clark explained a survey of community members revealed the ability to get in and out of the buildings was priority. It is too late in the year to get blacktop estimates but the District is working on accessible furniture and bathrooms.

The committee discussed the status of funding granted in prior years. Roy-Clark stated by the end of the summer, the District will have spent all of the money that is over three years old and is mindful money was committed and should be used on the intended projects or given back. Slaughter and Roy-Clark spoke to challenges of timing work when buildings are in use year round, the length of time it takes to get bids and the availability of workers to do the jobs. There are many projects coming up this summer at Wildwood. Then the summer program can return to Wildwood and the District can work on the other schools.

Spitzer noted both the library and school are asking for a truck with a plow and inquired about the possibility of sharing a vehicle. Slaughter said they are open to the idea of sharing equipment but this type of arrangement between other local entities has proved challenging. Roy-Clark added the truck is used as part of their fleet to haul, landscape, etc. in addition to plowing.

The committee discussed Climate Action Goals, the feasibility of using of electric vehicle alternatives, working with the sustainability coordinator to apply for grants, the experience of purchasing an electric school bus, maintenance costs and limits of current battery technology for specialized vehicles.

4. Public Comment

Martha Hanner asked for clarity on if the committee or Town is considering the library project versus the elementary. She asked if the projects are in conflict in terms of budgets, if the decisions will be made in the same time frame, and if JCPC will be discussing those issues.

The committee thanked her for the question and explained JCPC will be looking at the annual capital needs. The Finance committee will discuss and assess the bigger building projects that will require separate Council decisions. The library project is coming up very fast and the Town will need to make decision to accept the grant over the 6 months following July 2020 based on current grant award timelines and guidelines. The Town will begin a long-term process to investigate feasibility and plans for the school in May. One does not preclude the other, the Council and Finance Committee hope there will be a way to finance and address all four upcoming projects, including major repairs over a number of years - the school, library, public works building and fire station.

5. Approval of Minutes

Anthony Delaney took minutes at the previous meeting. The Committee agreed that the JCPC Chair will review and finalize minutes, after asking for comments from Committee members on draft minutes.

6. Discussion Next meeting- The committee agreed to meet March 31st to accommodate potential changes.

7. Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the President 48 Hours in Advance- None

8. Adjourn

MOVED: Member Lefebvre moved, second by member Spitzer to adjourn. Meeting adjourned 7:30 PM

Submitted by Lindsey McConnell

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented

FY21-25 Capital Improvement Program Funding Summary

FY21-25 Capital Improvement Program Draft: 3.10.2020

Jones Library Expansion Project Disbursement Schedule

The Jones Library Five-Year Capital Plan- OPTION #1 MBLC Grant Accepted Renovate, Expand, Make Fully ADA Compliant 3.10.20

The Jones Library Five-Year Capital Plan- OPTION #3 MBLC Grant Refused Refurbishment to Protect Building Integrity Public Safety 3.10.20

Kuhn Riddle Architects Proposal for an Accessibility Study and review of Required Building Improvements 2.5.20

Jones Library Expansion Project Budget 3.10.20

MBLC 2016-17 Construction Grant Round Disbursement Form

RE: Grant Queries from Amherst Emails Lauren Stara and Sharon Sharry 4.26.17

FW: Queries about MBLC library construction grant programs James Lonergan and Sharon Sharry 3.13.19

Finegold Alexander Architects Memo Services to Define Sustainability Goals for the Jones Library 1.27.20

Financial Development Agency Staff and Client lists

Nancy Reeves Resume and Client List

Town of Amherst Form 2: Individual Capital Project Request

Amherst Information Systems Capital Requests

Town of Amherst Form 2: Individual Capital Project Request

Joint Capital Planning Committee Meeting Minutes 3.4.20

Joint Capital Planning Committee Meeting Minutes 2.13.20